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ABSTRACT

The Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs (IIRA) started at Western Illinois University in 1989. An outgrowth of the population declines and economic stagnation during the early 1980s, it provides a comprehensive program of applied research, technical assistance, policy evaluation, and educational outreach to community leaders and residents in rural Illinois. Based on the premise that a holistic approach is required for successful community development, IIRA focuses on six main issues; economic development, education, health care, public transportation, public management, and value-added agriculture. Following an introduction and brief sections on strategic planning efforts, personnel, funding, structure, and scope of activities, the bulk of this annual report is organized around IIRA's four main goals: 1) develop rural public policy, which includes value-added agricultural businesses, a strategic plan for rural development in Illinois, and an annual report on the status of rural Illinois; 2) advance the state of knowledge on rural issues, which encompasses research on economic development, rural health, social and demographic concerns, and education; 3) provide high quality training, including conferences, training seminars, and instructional activities; and 4) provide technical assistance to economic development agencies. An appendix lists activities performed by institute personnel, including books, book chapters, journal articles, project reports, IIRA Rural Research Reports, Illinois Rural Life Panel, professional and trade publications, book reviews, conference presentations, other presentations, training and technical assistance programs, other off-campus professional activities, and grants. (TD)

Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs Annual Report 1999

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Mission

The IIRA partners with public and private agencies to improve community and economic development, which includes public education, health care, transportation, and public management concerns in rural Illinois by providing value-added information and technical expertise.



Vision

Using an integrated delivery system and the latest technologies, the IIRA is nationally recognized as a model for providing knowledge, information, and innovative strategies to help overcome rural disparities, improve policy decisions, and help rural residents in Illinois achieve a high quality of life and maintain the long-term viability of their communities.

Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs Annual Report 1999

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Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs

Annual Report 1999 (July 1, 1998–June 30, 1999)

The Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs (IIRA) started at Western Illinois University (WIU) in 1989. An outgrowth of the population declines and economic stagnation during the early 1980s, it provides a comprehensive program of applied research, technical assistance, policy evaluation, and educational outreach to numerous community leaders and residents in rural Illinois. Originally designed to complement the Governor's Rural Affairs Council, it offers a wide diversity of services directly to rural policymakers and state legislators to improve the quality of life and long-term viability of rural communities in Illinois.

IIRA helps strengthen the decisionmaking capacity of community leaders and policymakers by providing technical support, applied research, policy evaluation, and educational programs across the state. It also supports the Illinois Rural Life Panel, an annual survey of rural residents on public policy issues.

IIRA has focused on five main rural issues: economic development, education, health care, public transportation, and public management. In fall 1999, programming in value-added agriculture was added to help both farm families and small towns gain access to better employment and entrepreneurial opportunities to offset persistent low commodity and livestock prices.

IIRA programming is based on the premise that a holistic approach is required for successful local community development. While the main interest may be in creating high paying jobs, communities with a strong educational system, high quality health care, and transportation access for residents are much more attractive to business investors than communities without these services. This understanding generated a set of integrated programs in economic development, education, transportation, health, and public finance/administration. Every effort has been made to avoid duplicating programs offered by other established agencies and organizations such as the Cooperative Extension Service (CES) and Farm Bureau. At the same time, IIRA works with many other university, state, and federal agencies on diverse rural issues.

IIRA is a founding member and participant in the Governor's Rural Affairs Council and Rural Partners, the State Rural Development Council

in Illinois. Rural Partners and IIRA cosponsor the annual Community and Economic Development Conference and IIRA faculty play a leadership role in preparing an economic development agenda for rural Illinois.

IIRA activities are guided by four main goals and their related strategies (outlined in the IIRA Strategic Plan); the goals are:

1. **Develop Rural Public Policy**—To provide continued awareness and to help formulate state and national policies and strategies to address rural issues.
2. **Advance the State of Knowledge on Rural Issues**—To advance the state of knowledge regarding rural issues by participation in scholarly and professional activities and dissemination of research through a broad range of outlets.
3. **High Quality Training**—To help community decisionmakers, volunteers, and students to acquire the knowledge, skills, and abilities to make effective decisions to successfully lead state and local rural development efforts.
4. **Technical Assistance to Economic Development Agencies**—To provide multifaceted technical assistance to support and promote community and economic development in rural Illinois communities.

Strategic Planning Efforts

The substantial increase in funding and addition of several staff prompted IIRA to review its management structure and operating procedures. The Lincoln Foundation (LF), based in Chicago, has an excellent program through which agencies can identify strengths and weaknesses and undergo a strategic planning process. IIRA used the LF self-study to assess its current practices and procedures and to identify areas that could be improved.

The initial strategic plan was undertaken in 1990 with a revision in 1996. The plan was reexamined and updated in early 1999 with revised vision and mission statements, goals, strategies, and performance indicators. Each unit within IIRA updated its tactical plan to meet the overall goals and reach the IIRA vision.

A revised management process was initiated to promote communication within the entire organization and to provide more accountability needed

because of the larger organization. In addition, an online electronic management information system (MIS) is under construction. This system uses activity-based cost accounting principles and will allow IIRA to generate value statements for clients and track the costs of completing projects in a more sophisticated fashion. Revisions in the MIS will continue in the future as efforts to track progress toward goals and the vision further develop.

IIRA Personnel

IIRA has a staff of 22 full-time equivalent professional and clerical positions. Four additional WIU faculty have a continuing relationship with the IIRA as Research Fellows while retaining full appointments in their departments and other faculty participate in IIRA-sponsored projects as needed. Ten faculty at WIU and other Illinois universities are supported on short-term projects; WIU student assistants and graduate students are also supported. Faculty in IIRA teach classes in several departments, serve as mentors and internship supervisors, and participate in other student-oriented support activities. The faculty and staff are listed below:

Faculty and Staff

Norman Walzer, Ph.D., Economics*	.....	director, IIRA
LaVonne Straub, Ph.D., Economics (one-third time)**	.....	
.....	.....	assistant administrator
John Gruidl, Ph.D., Agricultural Economics*	.....	associate professor
Christopher Merrett, Ph.D., Geography*	.....	associate professor
A. Lee Eavy, Ph.D., Agricultural Economics	.....	
.....	.....	manager Peace Corps Fellows Program
Nancy Baird, MS, Human Ecology	.....	
.....	.....	research and instructional consultant
Dan Walker, MA, Economics *	.....	manager, RETAC
Joel McQueen, MA, Geography	.....	manager, RTAC
Dan Voorhis, BB	.....	director, SBDC
Steve Kline, MBA	.....	manager, MAPPING programs
Lori Sutton, MA, Economics*	.....	
.....	.....	research associate, Data Base Management
Bill Westerhold, MA, Geography	.....	
.....	.....	manager, Business and Industry Data Center
Robin Hanna, MA, MPA	.....	research associate, Mapping programs
Mary Holmes, MA, Agricultural Economics*	.....	
.....	.....	research associate, C-FAR
Kristi Kupka, BS, Accounting	.....	
.....	.....	research and instructional consultant

Lyle Nichols, MS, Marketing research associate, RTAC/RETAC
 Derek Shugart, MPA research associate, Mapping programs
 Traci Bray, MA, Law Enforcement (one-third time)
 research associate, ILEEI
 Monica Grimsley, MA, Economics (one-half time)*
 research associate
 Robin Johnson, MA,
 Public Administration, Office of the Comptroller
 Carol Harper staff secretary, IIRA
 JoAnn Kennedy secretary, RTAC/RETAC
 Carolyn Lawrence (one-half time)
 secretary, Peace Corps Fellows program
 Donna Corrie administrative clerk, SBDC

Research Fellows

Jeff Crump, Ph.D.** Geography
 Bob Fischer, Ph.D. Law Enforcement and Justice Administration
 Bob Hall, Ph.D.** Educational Administration
 Max Pierson, Ed.D. Educational Administration

Institute Affiliates

Emeric Solymossy Department of Management, WIU
 Lucinda Beier and Sharon Mills Illinois State University
 Jeanne Stierman WIU Library
 Don Johnston and Michael Jackson
 Health Education and Promotion, WIU
 Sue Kohler and Ray Lenzi Southern Illinois University
 Roger Luman Bradley University
 Karen Stott Alliance Library System

Student Support Staff

Kristin Baker Graduate Assistant, Communication
 Jeremy Grimsley Graduate Assistant, MBA
 Earl McDowell Graduate Assistant, Geography
 Nichole Moulin Graduate Assistant, Communication
 Jennifer Waner Graduate Assistant, Economics
 Heather Atkinson Peace Corps Fellow
 David Dyrek Peace Corps Fellow
 Terry Hall Peace Corps Fellow
 Joel Haskard Peace Corps Fellow
 Mary Honer Peace Corps Fellow
 Kent Jarcik Peace Corps Fellow
 Angela Johnson Peace Corps Fellow
 Robert Kazmierski Peace Corps Fellow
 Scott Paszkiewicz Peace Corps Fellow
 Ursula Pike Peace Corps Fellow
 Rebecca Shaw Peace Corps Fellow

Laura Walsh	Peace Corps Fellow
Andrea Crary	Student Assistant
Andrea Furniss	Student Assistant
Jenny Kerr	Student Assistant
Emily Knox	Student Assistant
Christina Kramer	Student Assistant
Emily Pfundstein	Student Assistant
Stephanie Smart	Student Assistant
Amy Smith	Student Assistant
Jolene Tompkins	Student Assistant
Teresa Volk	Student Assistant

*Teach courses in Departments of Economics or Geography

**Joint appointments between IIRA and academic departments

Institute Funding and Structure

Because of the diversity of program areas, IIRA receives funding from several sources. Organizationally, IIRA has five main units: the Rural Economic Technical Assistance Center (RETAC), the Rural Transit Assistance Center (RTAC), the Small Business Development Center (SBDC), the Business and Industry Data Center (BIDC), and the Illinois Center for Competitive Government (ICCG). Each unit has a manager with widespread decisionmaking authority regarding projects and programs. The programs are integrated in various ways and operate within the overall IIRA goals. Projects usually involve faculty and staff from several units and draw on IIRA resources.

The **RETAC** is a cooperative venture between Bradley University, Southern Illinois University-Carbondale (SIUC), and the IIRA. Started in 1989, the main funding has been from the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration, through its university centers program; however, other contracts with agencies and local governments support the economic development efforts as well. The target area includes economically distressed counties in west-central and southern Illinois but many services are provided to local economic development groups across the state.

The **RTAC** is funded by the Federal Transportation Administration through the Illinois Department of Transportation. RTAC provides training and technical

assistance to local public transit managers across rural Illinois. In addition, RTAC assists the Illinois Department of Transportation on special projects, as requested. RETAC and RTAC share one staff member who works on the role of public transit in local economic development. This focus is especially important as communities develop more effective methods to help low income residents and welfare recipients access jobs.

The **SBDC** is funded jointly by the Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs (DCCA) and the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). In general, SBDCs help entrepreneurs and small business owners improve business management, secure financing, and bring ideas into production. Training programs using video teleconferences on various aspects of small business management have been especially useful in reaching potential entrepreneurs in the target region. The SBDC services are provided in cooperation with community colleges in a 12 county area in western and central Illinois.

The **BIDC** network is designed to meet the growing needs for effective use of economic statistics, especially since the advent of Geographic Information Systems (GIS). Small businesses and other data users are provided with census data and other economic and demographic information. These files are supplemented with data prepared by affiliates or the state. The BIDC also offers technical assistance in data interpretation, is currently developing a GIS-based data locator on the Internet, and assists regional councils in meeting the data needs of their clients.

The **ICCG**, formed in July 1997, is the result of a cooperative agreement which existed for six years between the IIRA and the Office of Comptroller Loleta Didrickson. This effort has allowed for the continuation of research on financial and administrative practices in local government. Keeping local public officials and managers abreast of new management practices is the main thrust of ICCG and research has been conducted in the areas of managed competition, privatization, and contracting for services. ICCG publishes reports and articles and hosts conferences and training events for local public officials. Beginning in

July 1999, the scope of the Center has shifted from managed competition and privatization efforts to more intensive study of issues facing municipalities in rural Illinois and how they will adjust to the new economy.

Funding in 1998-1999

As part of a seven year review, IIRA was encouraged to pursue a New and Expanded Program Request within the University. This process generated an increase in the appropriated budget of \$300,000. The funds were used to expand the staff and to move into new areas of endeavor, specifically value-added agriculture and rural social issues, including housing and social capital.

The additional funds were used to add two staff to existing programs: The Peace Corps Fellows Program and MAPPING the Future of Your Community. Also, a tenure track faculty position in rural sociology was added in August 1999. This person will develop a housing research initiative in IIRA and work with community leaders to find suitable options for addressing local needs.

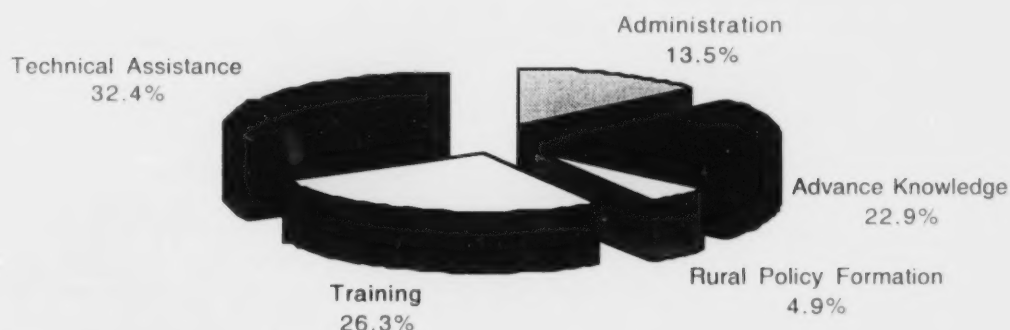
IIRA also participated in the Council of Food and Agricultural Research (C-FAR) research efforts and undertook several projects (\$145,000) to identify successful strategies used by small communities to start New Generation Cooperatives (NGCs) and to capture more of the value-added to farm products as they move through the distribution chain. A staff member was added to manage this program.

By request of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the Illinois Department of Human Services, and Rural Partners, IIRA staff undertook two research projects to determine the adequacy of public transportation and to identify successful strategies that various agencies in Illinois and surrounding states have undertaken to increase the mobility of rural residents. The reports are currently being printed and plans are to hold several seminars and workshops to help agencies in rural areas improve public and private transportation options and ultimately increase mobility in rural areas.

Scope of Activities

In FY99, IIRA faculty and staff distributed their work and time among several main activities related to the goals of Rural Public Policy, Advancing Knowledge on Rural Issues, High Quality Training, and Technical Assistance (**Figure 1**). Many IIRA services are based on demand response, thus, requests for services vary from year to year, especially between technical assistance and training. Also, the fact that many programs are externally funded means that the needs of funding agencies drive some of the work agendas.

Figure 1. IIRA Scope of Activities, FY99



Descriptions of programs and activities according to major IIRA goals are provided below.

Goal 1: Develop Rural Public Policy—To provide continued awareness and to help formulate state and national policies and strategies to address rural issues.

An initial reason for the creation of IIRA was to assist in formulating and promoting public policies aimed at improving the quality of life in rural areas. IIRA continues that role by working with Rural Partners and the Governor's Rural Affairs Council. In recent years, the Governor's Rural Affairs Council has been inactive but Lt. Governor Wood plans to reactivate it in Fall 1999.

Value-Added Agriculture Businesses

IIRA worked with several state agencies during 1998-1999 on state policy issues. Relatively new is the work with a consortium of the Illinois Department of Agriculture, the Department of Commerce and Community Affairs, and the USDA on an initiative to bring agricultural products more into the local economic development arena. The intent is to support DCCA area professional representatives in an effort to attract industries that will expand domestic markets for locally-raised crops and livestock.

Strategic Plan for Rural Development in Illinois

IIRA continues its alliance with Rural Partners to develop a long-term agenda for rural Illinois. Participating agencies in this project, along with IIRA, include the USDA-Rural Development, DCCA, Illinois Department of Agriculture, UI-UC CES, the Governor's Rural Affairs Council, Southern Illinois University, Illinois Rural Water Association, and the Illinois Department of Public Health.

This long-term planning effort is designed to cause local and state policymakers to recognize important issues facing rural Illinois and to offer suggestions through which the quality of life can be improved. Also included are benchmarks that can be used by public agencies to monitor progress in meeting long-term goals and objectives. The goals and strategies outlined in this effort have been reviewed by numerous rural residents and community leaders to obtain their insight about what is needed to improve living conditions in rural Illinois.

During the Gubernatorial campaign, candidates expressed a commitment to the principles and practices expressed in the document *Building a Brighter Future*. Governor Ryan and Lt. Governor Wood made a commitment to implement a program for rural Illinois based on suggestions contained in the project, including reactivation of the Governor's Rural Affairs Council. The council has had an organizational meeting and a search for a director is underway. IIRA has assisted in these efforts.

Annual Report on Status of Rural Illinois

Executive Order #13 (1991) charged the IIRA and the Governor's Rural Affairs Council with preparing an annual report to the Governor and General Assembly on the status of rural Illinois with recommendations for policies to improve the quality of life. The 1999 report includes an update of economic conditions and trends in rural Illinois, reviews innovative programs and progress by state departments and local public agencies to address rural concerns, and identifies issues not adequately addressed which need further attention.

The 1999 report paid special attention to the need to better integrate agriculture in local economic development in rural areas and to expand domestic markets for agriculture. This approach will increase off-farm employment opportunities for farm families and will also increase the number of high-paying jobs in small rural communities.

The report also addressed the need for additional attention in the areas of health care, environmental issues, and public transportation. Rural areas have been successful in moving residents on welfare to gainful employment but, in some instances, these residents do not have access to dependable transportation. Likewise elderly residents with limited mobility may not have easy access to essential public services such as health care. This lack of accessibility may ultimately cause them to migrate from rural areas to urban areas with better services.

Goal 2: *Advance the State of Knowledge on Rural Issues* —To advance the state of knowledge regarding rural issues by participation in scholarly and professional activities and dissemination of research through a broad range of outlets.

The IIRA maintains an extensive research program consistent with its goal of advancing the state of knowledge on rural issues. This research also contributes to the goal of formulating statewide policies and it provides data and results to support effective decisionmaking. The research is conducted by IIRA faculty as well as by other faculty at WIU and elsewhere. Research products meet peer review quality expectations and appear in recognized academic

and professional journals, thereby contributing to the general knowledge on these issues. They are also expected to be applied in nature to support outreach activities and decisionmaking.

IIRA publishes a series of ten brief research reports annually to disseminate information and help local public officials and community leaders remain current on rural issues. Some reports are written by IIRA faculty and staff, while others are prepared under contract by scholars at other institutions. The *Rural Research Report* series is designed to stimulate thinking about local issues in rural Illinois and to encourage local leaders to try new ideas in their communities. A listing of *Rural Research Reports* published in FY99 appears later in this report.

To some extent, the research is molded by the expertise and interests of faculty; more important, however, is the need to better understand rural development issues, broadly defined. Therefore, most IIRA research addresses issues of (1) economic development, (2) health care, (3) social and demographic concerns, or (4) education. Projects in each of these areas are described below.

Economic Development Research

Library Project: Rural Affairs Collection

The WIU Library received support from IIRA in FY99 to build an information infrastructure to foster rural economic development in Illinois. One component of the Library's proposal was to continue the development of the rural affairs collection established with IIRA funding between 1990 and 1993.

Between 1994 and 1998, increases in the rural collection were limited, with approximately 43 titles of interest to IIRA research associates and clients added. Some of these titles were selected by academic departments, primarily titles from major trade publishers or university presses. In FY99, IIRA provided funding to acquire print and videotape resources on rural economic development. A simultaneous three-step approach was used to identify publications to acquire: citations collected in the past five years were reviewed and alphabetized; the new online

title database of a library vendor, Blackwell North America, was searched for appropriate rural titles available from major trade publishers; and addresses of nonprofit and research organizations contacted in the past were checked for updating and for current web sites.

Titles from major publishers identified through the database were then ordered, along with titles from the four regional rural development centers, from the American Planning Association, Aspen Institute, Heartland Center for Leadership Development, International City/County Management Association, and National Rural Health Association.

FY99 IIRA funds to the University Library permitted the acquisition of several print and video resources in rural affairs and economic development. This renewal of the collection in the area of rural affairs/economic development will ensure that there is one place in the state where written publications on these topics from both major publishers and nonprofit organizations are housed.

Value-Added Development

While agriculture is a declining employer statewide, it remains very important in most rural areas. In recent years, however, low commodity and livestock prices have placed many small farm families in financial jeopardy. IIRA staff is collaborating on a strategic research initiative funded by the Illinois Council on Food and Agricultural Research (C-FAR) to investigate the role of New Generation Cooperatives (NGCs) and collaborative enterprises in rural development.

The rationale for this research stems from ongoing changes in the agricultural sector. Macroscale changes such as the vertical integration of production, low commodity prices, rising costs of new farming technology, globalization of markets, and decreased farm subsidies have combined to force many family farms out of business. As the number of farms declines, a negative ripple effect impacts many community institutions.

Cooperatives offer a partial remedy to keep smaller farms in business. Collaboration allows more of the value-added to remain with producers as commodities move to the

marketplace. The goal is to conduct research and outreach that investigate and promote the possibility of increasing collaborative and cooperative efforts in rural Illinois.

Several research and outreach products have been completed or initiated during FY99. Ongoing projects include an edited book that examines the role of cooperatives in community development. This book has a planned publication date of Summer 2000.

The IIRA has commissioned 12 case studies of NGCs. These case studies from throughout the Midwest were chosen for the insights they might provide to community developers in rural Illinois. Other products include a bibliography on cooperative development for researchers and development practitioners, a directory of NGCs, and a rural research report examining the attitudes of economic development agencies toward agriculture. Some of this research is based on surveys of NGCs and economic development practitioners.

Economic Development Practices

There is a growing need for farm producers to become better linked with local economic development practitioners if high paying processing jobs are to be attracted to rural areas. To better understand successful working relationships, IIRA undertook a detailed mail survey of local economic development agencies in rural Illinois. More than 60 practitioners responded to the survey indicating the involvement by farm groups on local economic development boards, approaches used by practitioners in working with farm producers to identify potential businesses, and related issues.

The survey results demonstrate several findings. First, in some rural areas, farm groups have not been actively involved in decisions about local economic development issues. However, the development practitioners reported a willingness to work with these groups. Second, in those cases where farm groups have been involved, more interest in value-added agricultural processing businesses was expressed. Third, respondents reported a willingness to provide incentives to businesses that used locally-grown products as an input in further processing.

Free Trade, Entrepreneurship, and Rural Communities

Another research area focuses on the role of microeconomic and macroeconomic influences on rural development. Microeconomic projects have examined the role of female entrepreneurship in rural communities. A survey conducted by John Gruidl of 4,200 male and female entrepreneurs in rural and urban communities revealed a geographical and gender-based bias in entrepreneurial success. Female entrepreneurs living in rural communities had the highest failure rates. Reasons for this finding include problems experienced by females in accessing credit, lack of training, and inadequate mentoring and support systems. An article by Chris Merrett and John Gruidl will be published in the first issue of *The Professional Geographer* in 2000.

The macroeconomic focus examines the impact of free trade and foreign direct investment on rural economies. Ongoing research examines the regional variations in congressional support for free trade and the impact of free trade on foreign direct investment.

Measuring Success of Economic Development Tools

This research endeavor by John Gruidl involved a benefit and cost analysis of economic development tools used by local governments, including business incubators, revolving loan funds, and enterprise zones. The project, in collaboration with faculty at the University of Wisconsin, has gathered data from businesses that have participated in these economic development programs located in six communities in Illinois and Wisconsin. A broad identification of benefits and costs includes such measures as the community involvement of the company. A journal article is being prepared based on the survey results.

Public-Private Partnerships

During FY99, the Illinois Center for Competitive Governments (ICCG) published *Efficiency in County Government: The Role of Intergovernmental Agreements and Privatization*. The report, based on a survey of county governments in Illinois, received national recognition by the Reason Public Policy Institute based in California as "one of the most detailed and comprehensive studies of county-level privatization available."

Other research efforts included detailed studies of privatization in small and medium-size communities, opportunities for small businesses through privatization of local government services, and contracting practices in nonmetropolitan counties. Staff also spoke at several national conferences and workshops on privatization issues and published articles in trade publications such as the *Illinois Municipal Review*, *County to County*, *Privatization Watch*, and *Small Business Association Today*.

An edited book on managed competition, privatization, and other innovative management practices is currently being edited. This book, to be published by Quorum, should provide the latest thinking on privatization issues and contains chapters by several leading scholars on this issue. Center staff also will prepare case studies of innovative management practices in cities, counties, and townships; will produce a report on contracting and privatization practices in school districts; and complete research on how county health departments are managed and financed. A survey of economic development practices and issues in Illinois cities has been completed and is currently being analyzed with results expected in Fall 1999.

Heritage Tourism

Building on previous research in Canton, Illinois, this project, coordinated by Jeff Crump, assessed the potential of heritage tourism to bolster a local economy. In addition, a pilot project developing a short tour book focusing on the rich history of farm implement manufacture in Canton was developed.

A major component of this project was active involvement of WIU geography graduate students specializing in rural planning and development. As part of the research methods class, students undertook the historic research and field work necessary to document Canton's history and to produce the tour book. This project fosters the education of graduate students by giving them hands-on experience in both qualitative and quantitative methods. The major products of the project will be a refereed journal article on the history of Canton's farm implement industry, a report

on economic development and heritage tourism, and a tour book.

Accommodating the Elderly as Part of Community Development

Research conducted by LaVonne Straub adds to the understanding of how communities in rural Illinois are preparing to accommodate the needs of an expanding elderly population. An underlying premise guiding this research was that the traditional view of caring for the elderly, nursing home placement, is no longer appropriate in that the health status among the elderly is quite varied. Support for this project was provided by the Center for Rural Health, Illinois Department of Public Health. Results of the research and background on this topic are published in the *Rural Research Report*, Community Preparation for the Aging Population in Rural Illinois.

Questions about services for the elderly were included in a survey distributed statewide to both rural and urban cities by the IIRA and the Illinois Municipal League. In addition to documenting the range of services currently available, an objective was to learn whether communities considered issues associated with the aging population in community and economic development efforts. Results demonstrated that 76 percent of respondents considered these issues in their development efforts.

Comparisons between rural and metro communities reveal some differences; a higher percentage of rural respondents reported services as adequate in the 11 categories listed; public transportation for the elderly was the exception. Respondents identified their greatest concerns in caring for the elderly as providing adequate, affordable housing, along with alternative living situations to accommodate independent living; providing elderly with transportation options; and cost and availability of health care and related services. The research concludes that while rural communities face many obstacles in meeting the needs of the elderly, these do not deter efforts to plan for and develop services, although the full range of options for a continuum of needs has not been realized by most rural communities.

Knowledge Networks in SME Firms

IIRA-funded research by Emeric Solymossy (WIU Department of Management) examined the impact of the information age and knowledge networks on small and medium size (SME) firms. These firms are prevalent in rural Illinois and their viability is essential to economic development of a region. Data solicited by survey from 1,250 for-profit firms, with fewer than 300 employees, in northwestern Illinois were used to explore whether networks provide knowledge that benefits SMEs and to identify the types of knowledge-networks used by these firms.

Analysis of the data show that more than 70 percent of these SME firms view networks as providing knowledge of significant benefit. On average, firms which perceive a benefit from networks feel stronger about their competitive position regarding access to markets than those which do not. Results show performance differences in the two groups; income levels and economic success seem to be influenced by network contacts.

Those firms which do not perceive a benefit from networks rely more on their experiences and on less formal networks. While a more active use of knowledge networking may facilitate creation of new knowledge, firms not doing so appear satisfied with existing forms of knowledge acquisition.

Findings from the limited responses to the survey are considered tentative. Overall, the study suggests a direction for further research into this topic of importance to economic development and to rural Illinois firms in the competitive environment created by rapidly changing technology and new knowledge.

Rural Health Research

Pharmacy Services

Data from the Illinois Rural Life Panel (IRLP) were used by LaVonne Straub to continue a study of access to pharmacy services in rural Illinois. A previous *Rural Research Report* focused on results of a survey of pharmacies; this time the focus was on consumer

satisfaction with these services. The report, *Consumer Satisfaction with Rural Pharmacy Services*, was coauthored by a WIU graduate student in economics.

The IRLP responses show that both access and satisfaction are very good; 77 percent of respondents have a pharmacy in their community and 64 percent use it for prescriptions. Convenience is the major reason for choice of a pharmacy, followed by quality and cost. Annual expenditures on prescriptions vary; over half of the respondents spend less than \$300 and one-fourth spend \$500 or more; one third do not have insurance covering prescriptions. Significant conclusions are that a vast majority of consumers who consider quality as the main reason for pharmacy choice have access within ten miles, and that services in addition to prescription filling are important.

A related project, supported by IIRA and conducted by LaVonne Straub and Carolyn Tripp (WIU Department of Marketing and Finance), addresses the topic of how the Internet is used by rural consumers to search for information on prescription drugs. Data for the study on use of the Internet and information on access to drug information and purchases by rural residents are from IRLP surveys. While these data show little use of the Internet for prescription purchase or information, increased use is expected and this will have implications for rural pharmacies, as well as for consumers. Results of this study were presented at two national conferences and a manuscript has been accepted by a refereed journal. External funding sources for continuing the research are being explored.

Academic Research Program: Health Research

Two faculty members from other Illinois institutions were solicited to participate in rural health research sponsored by the IIRA's Academic Research Program. Each submitted a proposal for a research topic and scope of work to be completed in exchange for grants. Paul Sarvela and Eduardo Monge, Southern Illinois University-Carbondale, completed research and developed a *Rural Research Report*, *Health Behaviors of Elementary School Children in Rural Southern Illinois*.

Michael Glasser, University of Illinois College of Medicine, Rockford and Thomas Prohuska, School of Public Health, University of Illinois, Chicago studied elderly patients and caregivers and prepared a *Rural Research Report*, The Role of Informal Caregivers in the Health Care Decisions of Older Adults in Rural Communities. Both reports are part of a report series published by IIRA and distributed to more than 1,200 state agencies, libraries, and other outlets. These reports are also published on the IIRA home page (www.IIRA.org).

Research on Social and Demographic Concerns

Rural Welfare Reform and Nonprofit Survey Analysis

This ongoing research project by Chris Merrett focuses on the roles of nonprofit organizations, community development, and welfare reform. In 1997, Congress implemented the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act whereby recipients must show a good faith effort to find gainful employment in order to receive government assistance and there are limits on the length of time recipients can receive income assistance.

If low income families needed help, it was assumed that the nonprofit social service providers would be the source. The question investigated by this research is the extent to which nonprofit social service providers, such as homeless shelters and food banks, can handle increased demands on their services. A survey, funded by the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago and the FDIC, revealed that demand for services offered by nonprofit social services providers is already high and that increased demand will cause problems for these organizations and their clientele.

Outcomes from this research include scholarly presentations, two rural research reports, a manuscript currently under review by a journal, and a directory of nonprofit organizations published by the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago. This research also dovetails with other research projects conducted by the IIRA on welfare reform, rural transit, and rural welfare reform.

Education Research

Showcase of Best Practices

The *Showcase of Best Practices* in using technology to enhance learning was designed by Barb Easley and Jan Braun of the Mid-Illini Educational Cooperative and Susan Garton (WIU Educational Administration Department). The showcase is designed to provide recognition and networking for rural school districts which have demonstrated initiative and creativity in using technology to enhance learning for K-12 students. The project managers felt that rural districts were using technology effectively, as much or more than large urban districts, yet urban districts were receiving the bulk of recognition and awards. The researchers' intent in designing the project was to assess and demonstrate the use of technology for enhancing learning in rural districts.

Nominations for using technology to enhance learning were requested from teachers and administrators in mailings to districts, at professional conferences, and online. The nominations were scored by three readers, scores have been compiled, and 15 nominations were selected to showcase at local and national conferences. Among the 35 nominations were several high-scoring projects not selected because they were still in the planning stages at the time of nomination.

Garton presented the *Best Practices* at the NCPEA (National Council of Professors of Educational Administration) annual conference. She will also present *Best Practices* at the annual Conference on Education, the national conference for AASA (American Association of School Administrators) in March 2000.

Locally, nominations continue to be submitted via the web site for the *Showcase of Best Practices*. The teachers and principals in the WIU administrative certification program are required to identify and submit nominations for *Best Practices* as an assignment for EDAD 518: Administrative Applications of Technology. This assignment ensures that researchers have continuing contact with the rural districts in the WIU service area.

A summary of *Best Practices* in using technology to enhance learning is currently being written and an abbreviated summary will be published by IIRA. The longer version is planned as a book-length publication.

Goal 3: Provide High Quality Training—To help community decisionmakers, volunteers, and students to acquire the knowledge, skills and abilities to make effective decisions to successfully lead state and local rural development efforts.

Providing high quality training for local economic development practitioners is an important part of the overall mission and is a responsibility shared by every unit within IIRA.

Conferences and Training Seminars

Each year, IIRA conducts several statewide conferences and a series of one-day seminars on various issues important to rural policymakers in Illinois. Examples of these programs are listed below.

Annual Rural Community Development Conference

The 10th annual Rural Community Economic Development Conference was held in March and attracted more than 300 participants from throughout the state. The program brought in nationally-recognized speakers on a variety of rural topics with special emphasis on technology and the Internet as an economic development tool. Lieutenant Governor Wood updated participants about plans to revitalize the Governor's Rural Affairs Council. Case studies and best management practices were featured during the conference as was in-depth training on select economic development techniques. Participants at the conference gave the presentations high ratings.

Innovative Approaches to Agriculture

A conference on value-added agriculture, with special attention paid to New Generation Cooperatives, was held for farm groups and local economic development officials at Western Illinois University in February. A total of 162 farmers, economic developers, and other professionals from the region attended the one-day event. The conference grew from a series of meetings with farm groups and

economic development practitioners in Adams, Warren, Henderson, and Fulton Counties. As part of the program, these groups met to decide possible steps that could be taken to increase value-added agricultural opportunities in the local area.

Tri-State Development Summit

RETAC, along with many other agencies and corporations in the tri-state area, cosponsor the annual Tri-State Development Summit held each October. More than 300 people attended the one-day conference that featured presentations. The discussions focused on providing a regional approach to development, including transportation, business locations, workforce training, and educational opportunities. The message was that strong support from top officials and private enterprise in Illinois, Iowa, and Missouri is available to work at eliminating political barriers to regional development.

RTAC Conferences and Training Programs

RTAC sponsors two conferences each year. In FY99, the Fall Conference, held in Monticello with PiatTran as the hosting agency, attracted 35 participants. The conference featured a seminar entitled *Innovative Strategies to Increase Ridership* conducted by faculty from University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. The Spring Conference, held in Springfield, attracted 45 participants. RTAC also offers a semiannual centralized training program for management personnel that serves as a convenient forum to exchange ideas among transit providers.

RTAC also cosponsored the fourth *Vehicle Maintenance Roundtable* in Springfield as part of the series of seminars focused on transit vehicle maintenance. The sessions are designed to bring maintenance technicians together from around the state to discuss common transit vehicle problems. There were 42 participants at this session.

RTAC provides both on-site and regional training programs. Training is important in the transit industry, and the availability of low-cost training through RTAC is vital to rural transit agencies, many of which have limited resources and high employee turnover rates. Driver training programs are provided under a contract with Spoon River

College. These programs have been well-received and will be continued in the future. During FY99, RTAC offered four on-site training programs: *Customer Service*, *Defensive Driving*, *Emergency Procedures*, and *Passenger Assistance*. *Customer Service* is a four-module course designed to help transit agencies promote teamwork and improve service to passengers. *Defensive Driving* is an eight-module course that provides both classroom and hands-on training for transit drivers. A popular feature of the program is the opportunity for drivers to demonstrate their driving skills.

Emergency Procedures is an eight-module course that teaches participants how to react to unforeseen situations on the road. The course tries to involve local emergency response personnel in the training exercises. *Passenger Assistance* is a two-module session that instructs drivers and support personnel in the proper methods of transporting persons with disabilities.

RTAC sponsored on-site training programs in Belleville (30 participants), Danville (two programs, 20 participants), Monticello (8 participants), Monmouth (18 participants), Charleston (22 participants), and Mt. Vernon (35 participants).

Workshop Series for Peace Corps Fellow

This seminar series brought nationally-recognized community development academics and practitioners to speak with students and IIRA faculty as well as to faculty in related disciplines. The seminar, organized as part of the skills course for Peace Corps Fellows, provided opportunities for training and for discussions on current issues facing rural Illinois.

GIS Support Activities

The number of requests for GIS support received by IIRA continues to increase. The requests range from creation of maps to advice on purchasing equipment or software. Training programs are regularly offered to regional planning councils as is on-site technical assistance.

McDonough County GIS Center. The creation of a McDonough County GIS Center will allow for mapping

and analysis of spatially-distributed data within the county and within select county municipalities. The initial requirement for such analysis and mapping is the creation of a real-world coordinate (e.g. state plan coordinate system or latitude/longitude) base map of the county. Numerous databases will be compiled for the county as a whole as well as for individual municipalities. GIS applications will allow more efficient operation of current community practices and the addition of new solutions to problems.

GIS applications of this system are numerous and range from infrastructure management to economic development. Unfortunately, the cost of a GIS Center (including hardware, software, and personnel) is prohibitive for smaller communities. The McDonough County GIS Center will provide services to communities within the county (Bardolph, Blandinsville, Bushnell, Colchester, Good Hope, Prairie City, Sciota, and Tennessee) at cost. The databases created by IIRA will be used by the GIS Center and by communities within McDonough County. The estimated date for the GIS Center to produce maps, spatial analysis, and other products is January 2000.

In 1999, with funding from the U.S. Economic Development Administration, IIRA continued a three-year project of technical assistance, training, and data to a consortium of four Regional Planning Commissions (RPCs). Efforts focused on providing enhanced data products, hands-on training, and software solutions for GIS. IIRA also provided each agency with a copy of ArcView GIS, a desktop GIS software package. This software provides each agency with a common data format to share information. Two workshops were held to train staff members on how to use the GIS software.

IIRA also provided several days of on-site training to each RPC. Training sessions were designed around the specific needs of each agency and included segments on using GIS software. Training sessions focused on how to make better use of GIS software and on how to overcome technical problems. Two RPCs also received GIS training for a group of local officials within the counties served.

Project staff produced maps for each of the four RPCs to use in various grant applications. Many of these maps, produced from address lists provided by the four agencies, show the location of residents within a community.

IIRA will continue to work with RPCs helping them develop GIS technology at the local level. Several other RPCs have expressed interest in receiving assistance with GIS and IIRA will provide such assistance where needed.

Instructional Activities

Offering courses in community and economic development is one of the strategies related to the goal of providing quality training. Further, as an university academic unit, IIRA is well integrated into the overall undergraduate teaching mission of WIU. Every semester, several faculty and staff teach and perform educational service activities in academic departments, depending on expertise. Eavy, Gruidl, Holmes, Merrett, Sutton, Walker, and Walzer teach at least one class per semester in Agriculture, Geography, or Economics. During the 1999 academic year, IIRA faculty taught 20 classes.

Also, faculty make guest presentations in classes, direct Master's theses, and work with students on class-related projects, usually on topics involving data analysis and presentation. IIRA faculty teach in the Honors Program, advise graduate students, and support students in research projects. Graduate students are encouraged to use IIRA collected data files and to develop projects and papers which focus on rural topics.

Peace Corps Fellows Program

The Peace Corps Fellows (PCF) Program in Rural Community Development recruits returned Peace Corps volunteers into Master's degree programs in rural community development. They earn academic degrees in Geography (Rural and Regional Planning); Political Science (Public Administration); Economics; Business Administration (MBA); Recreation, Park, and Tourism Administration; and Health Education and Promotion. Graduates from the program also earn a Certificate in Community Development from WIU.

All PCFs enroll in four core classes in community development in addition to completing all course requirements for their respective graduate degree. Fellows also serve an 11-month paid internship in a small town or rural planning agency, assisting community leaders with development projects. Regional agencies that serve rural communities also provide internships.

Seven Fellows completed field internships during the 1998-1999 assignment cycle and recorded an impressive list of major accomplishments with partner communities. They provided community coordination and leadership while serving as catalysts for change and focal points for community activities. During 1998-99, Fellows served in Ashland, Carbon Cliff, Golden, Nauvoo, Princeville, Sparta, and Watseka providing leadership on issues including improving access to rural health care, promoting tourism and coordinating community development efforts, and helping a community establish a tax-exempt organization and foundation. The program provides a wide base of services to rural Illinois communities by young professionals building and enhancing their field-based credentials.

The June, 1999 cohort of Fellows was placed in eight assignments across rural Illinois and two in Webster, South Dakota to help that rural community establish a Fellows program. Fellows were placed in Albion (the Greater Wabash RPC), Cairo (the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone), Pittsfield (Pike County), Havana (Chamber of Commerce), Yorkville (urban forestry and Illinois Department of Natural Resources), Galesburg (Knox County Soil and Water Conservation District), Henry (Prairie Rivers Resource Conservation and Development), and Annawan (City of Annawan).

The program was expanded this year to address environmental management issues associated with community development; three internships deal with the effects of watershed and natural resource management on rural development. Environmental issues are increasing in importance and the program has attracted interest across rural Illinois.

The PCF program cosponsored the annual convocation of Peace Corps Fellows programs in Chicago, and continues to be recognized for its efforts to improve the quality of life in rural Illinois. Expansion of the program to South Dakota was at their request. The IIRA program regularly receives requests for information about its activities.

Community Service Internship Program

As part of its instructional activities, the IIRA coordinates an internship program that places undergraduates with community agencies. This program offers students an opportunity to gain work experience while learning more about agencies that provide community services. Early in FY99, all agencies that had previously participated in the program as internship sites were contacted regarding continuation during the upcoming year. In addition, several agencies that had not been involved were contacted to discuss the program and explore their interest.

Prior to the beginning of each semester, department chairs and internship directors were contacted to discuss the program. Four students were placed in internships over the two semesters. As part of the program, students and agency supervisors evaluate the experience. In all cases, evaluations were rated very high by both students and supervisors. Students rated the learning experiences as valuable, meeting or surpassing their expectations.

Goal 4: *Provide Technical Assistance to Economic Development Agencies*—To provide multifaceted technical assistance to support and promote community and economic development in rural Illinois communities.

IIRA faculty and staff provide a wide range of technical assistance and work closely with community leaders to identify solutions to local concerns. In many small rural communities elected officials are part-time and lack the formal training and resources available in larger communities. The issues faced by these elected officials are increasingly complex, but funds available to hire trained staff are scarce.

Economic development has long been a major concern in most communities, especially as the information age and

expanding technology alter economic activity. Rural businesses are faced with substantial competition for their products and for resources. An expanding national economy with low unemployment has contributed to the outmigration from rural areas and an increasing shortage of skilled labor.

Although unemployment in much of rural Illinois is relatively low, that is not the case in all places and many employed residents earn modest wages and few benefits. IIRA technical assistance helps these communities identify opportunities and select strategies that will bring economic stability. Several specific programs are described below.

Take Charge Project

There has been a definite interest by community leaders in undergoing a strategic visioning and planning process to find a better future for their communities. The MAPPING program and efforts by university or other public agencies were detailed in a research project coordinated by IIRA two years ago. Many of these strategic planning efforts were started from a report, *Take Charge*, prepared by the North Central Regional Center for Rural Development at Iowa State University.

After nearly a decade, this report is being updated through a consortium of faculty at major universities across the U.S. As part of this endeavor, Norman Walzer is coordinating the research on Monitoring and Evaluation of the strategic planning/visioning activities and is working with faculty at the University of Wisconsin, Iowa State University, and Kansas State University. The monitoring and evaluation section will help local leaders measure progress toward their community development goals and objectives. The approach builds on earlier work undertaken on monitoring and measurement efforts by various agencies.

The project should be completed by the end of 1999 with the revised report published and available in Spring 2000. The report will be widely disseminated and should be of considerable help to community leaders in planning for a brighter future.

Mapping the Future of Your Community

MAPPING programs involve a strategic visioning and planning process for community and economic development to rural cities, towns, and villages throughout Illinois. The MAPPING (Management and Planning Programs Involving Nonmetropolitan Groups) project began in 1991 with support from the Governor's Rural Affairs Council. Today, funding from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs supports a staff of three who have, to date, facilitated MAPPING projects in 66 communities in 38 counties (see **Figure 2**). Community population sizes range from as small as 313 to as large as 18,441. The average population size as of June 30, 1999 was 2,946. The visioning program, which has received national recognition, can be conducted either on a city, county, or regional (multicounty) basis.

Community MAPPING improves local decisions by providing accurate information, effective forums for public dialogue and problem-solving, and knowledge of innovative practices consistent with a community's vision for growth and change. Examples include Sheffield (pop. 951) where local leaders obtained a \$3,000 "Bright Idea" grant from Illinois Power to help fund a downtown park project; Princeville (pop. 1,421), where public and private sector leaders established an office for economic development with full-time staffing (a former IIRA Peace Corps Fellow) and an annual budget exceeding \$50,000; and Maquon (pop. 331), where residents acquired more than \$200,000 in local financial support to build a grocery/convenience store to provide residents with essential consumer products.

In addition to community and economic development projects, 36 rural Illinois school districts have participated in Mapping the Future of Your Schools, a strategic visioning and planning process that helps rural leaders find ways to enhance educational opportunities for students. Many downstate schools face declining enrollments and this fact, coupled with recent changes in the state foundation aid formula (which eliminated grade weightings and averaging of enrollment decreases), means

that small rural districts continue to have financial pressure and struggle to improve educational program offerings.

Using a variety of assessment methods and interactive group sessions, IIRA facilitators review concerns raised by the instructional staff, administrators, and community residents who serve on School MAPPING Advisory Committees. Subsequently, a set of recommendations, based on the input from citizens, parents, teachers, and administrators, is publicly presented by the facilitators to the school board and the community at large.

Typical results include efforts to broaden the curriculum, improve instructional supervision and communication, and create fair disciplinary policies. Other strategies have included facility improvements, vocational/career programs, special education opportunities, social services for students, and technology enhancements.

MAPPING the Future of Your Community's Health is a third visioning and planning process offered with financial support from the Illinois Department of Public Health, Center for Rural Health. Three community projects are currently underway involving groups in Hancock, Fulton, and Fayette Counties. Health MAPPING takes a slightly different approach to community health planning. By first broadening the traditional definition of community health (i.e., quality health care services), IIRA facilitators also help communities assess issues related to local health education and the environment. The goal is to (1) help local health providers and other leaders recognize which dimensions of community health to address, and (2) educate residents in such a way that they are empowered to assume more responsibility for local health needs.

Although community success depends on local commitment and leadership, the Institute stresses the creation of collaborative programming with regional planning agencies, University of Illinois Extension, DCCA/CCI, IL Main Street, Rural Partners, IDPH, USDA Rural Development, Small Business Development Centers, public utilities, and other public and private sector resources. All of the MAPPING projects are highly interactive and grassroots-driven. Designed with and for

rural people, MAPPING participants are encouraged to use their interdependencies to find lasting solutions based on a shared vision and a synergistic approach.

Community MAPPING sites range from very small to more than 15,000 population.

Figure 2. All MAPPING the Future Project Sites, 1991-1999



Rural Economic Technical Assistance Center (RETAC)

RETAC, as an EDA University Center, provides education, training, and technical assistance to local economic development units in distressed areas in rural Illinois counties. The thrust of the RETAC office is to strengthen the decisionmaking capacity of local rural leaders, especially EDA district offices in three main regions: (1) western and central Illinois, (2) 15 counties in southern Illinois, and (3) nonmetropolitan counties statewide.

In addition to providing direct technical support to local economic development units in the target region, RETAC's broad-based efforts include supporting the annual Rural Community Development Conference, state development associations, Mapping the Future of Your Community, and workshops and conferences on development issues.

The bimonthly RETAC newsletter, *Economic Development News and Views*, contains information on activities and other topics of interest to local and state economic development personnel across Illinois. The newsletter is distributed to a mailing list of approximately 900 local and state economic development practitioners, and is available on the Internet on the RETAC (<http://retac.org>) and IIRA (<http://iira.org>) home pages. This access significantly expands the outreach of RETAC and makes information about other services more readily available. An E-mail form is available for users to be added to the mailing list and/or to be notified electronically of new issues and events. These cover a variety of topics but are especially concerned with upcoming educational and professional events and innovative financing arrangements to support local economic development activities.

RETAC contracts with the Bradley University International Trade/NAFTA Center (ITC) and the Office of Economic and Regional Development (OERD) at SIU-C for specialized services. Bradley's ITC provides tailored export assistance to firms in west central Illinois. OERD at SIU supports RETAC's efforts in the 15 most southern Illinois counties, all of which have high unemployment, thereby strengthening rural communities in their development efforts.

Specific activities within RETAC include the following:

Support for Regional Planning Agencies. RETAC staff meet monthly with members of the Illinois Association of Regional Planners (ILARC) to exchange information on development issues. Most of these agencies are EDA district offices. During 1998-99, RETAC coordinated the update of its *Directory of Economic Development Resources* in conjunction with ILARC members. This directory will be placed on the Internet as well as distributed in paper copy.

Retail Trade Capture Analysis. RETAC conducts a retail analysis of community and county economies to assist policymakers in identifying the types of stores that might prosper in the community. The analysis consists of constant dollar growth, trade area capture, and pull factor analyses presented in a simplified format, allowing local leaders to better understand retail trends.

In 1998-99 more sophisticated models to assist community leaders and business owners identify potential retail businesses were explored. Work is underway to create a system that uses market area estimation combined with consumer expenditures to select businesses with potential for small communities. This program should be completed in spring 1999.

Rural Transit Assistance Center (RTAC)

RTAC delivers the federal Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP) in Illinois. This is a program of training and technical assistance for agencies that operate transit service in rural areas. RTAC goals are: To identify and disseminate high-quality information and training to rural transit operators who receive Section 5310 and 5311 funding, and to provide technical assistance and materials to state program managers where they can be used and reproduced economically to improve and standardize local service delivery. RTAC products and services include drivers, management, and support personnel training; technical assistance; seminars; statewide conferences; a newsletter; a resource library; and planning assistance to local government and sub-state agencies.

Technical Assistance and Presentations. Technical assistance is sometimes provided over the phone but other requests may require research by RTAC staff and responses take longer. Still other situations involve longer-term planning assistance, presentations, and dissemination of information at RTAC conferences and technical workshops.

RTAC is currently conducting a study in Bond County to determine the economic benefits of public transportation. A survey of passengers using Bond County Senior Center (BCSC) transportation services is in progress. The results of the passenger survey will provide socioeconomic and other information about those who use BCSC transportation. RTAC is using a methodology developed at the federal level through the Transit Cooperative Research Program to determine the economic benefits that BCSC transportation service provide to the community. Study results will be useful to BCSC in their efforts to build support for public transportation in the county.

Data gathering for the directory of Section 5311 transit agencies in Illinois is currently underway. RTAC distributed a provider survey to the 35 agencies receiving Section 5311 funding. The results will be used to compile a second edition of the provider directory. The publication features general information about each agency as well as aggregate statistics on such matters as statewide ridership, employee characteristics, and the Section 5311 vehicle fleet. The directory will be distributed in fall 1999.

RTAC was involved in local transportation planning projects during FY99 in Morgan, Scott, Fulton, Lawrence, and Pike Counties. The RTAC director made presentations at Illinois College, Jacksonville, and to the RTAC Spring Conference in Springfield.

Other Products and Services. RTAC maintains a transportation library within the Western Illinois University Library. The library has more than 1,100 items, including documents published by the U.S. Department of Transportation. Numerous training videos are also available and many are supplied free to RTAC through the

national RTAP. Other videos are purchased by RTAC, usually in response to an agency request. Printed materials and videos are available for specified periods of time to agencies and individuals at no charge.

Transreport. RTAC publishes *Transreport*, a quarterly newsletter containing current information on rural transportation, including legislative reports, technology trends, Info-Pack options, system profiles, and columns and reports by local transportation organizations. The newsletter is sent to more than 550 subscribers, public transit managers, local officials, state agencies, and other groups interested in rural transportation. Each issue features an in-depth profile of a Section 5311 agency in Illinois (35 in total). The newsletter is now on the Internet on the IIRA Web Page (<http://iira.org>) under the publications section and also on the RTAC Web Page (<http://iira/directory/RTAC.html>).

Info-Paks are packets of information RTAC mails to agencies and individuals who request information on various topics. *Info-Paks* primarily consist of printed materials maintained in RTAC files, but, increasingly, information is being assimilated in digital format from other sources through the Internet. The *Info-Pak* concept allows requests for information to be filled "on-demand" on 21 topics.

Illinois Center for Competitive Government

The Illinois Center for Competitive Government (ICCG) was created in 1997 as a partnership between IIRA and the Office of the Comptroller. Now in its third year, the Center conducts research into cutting-edge financial and administrative practices and provides information and assistance to local government managers. The combined effort of state government and higher education helps local governments become more cost-effective and efficient. ICCG also works closely with other local government organizations such as the Illinois Municipal League (IML) and Township Officials of Illinois (TOI). The ICCG specializes in providing services and resources to small- and medium-size local governments. Assistance during FY99 to many smaller communities throughout

included Monmouth (Warren County), Coal City (Grundy County), Abingdon (Knox County), and St. Joseph (Champaign County). ICCG staff also assists larger local governments on occasion, including McHenry County, Peoria, and Aurora.

The ICCG director served a second year on the Executive Committee of the National Council for Public-Private Partnerships, a Washington, DC-based organization that provides a forum for innovative ideas and creative approaches to forming strategic alliances. He is one of five public sector members nationwide to serve on the panel that has responsibility for the Council's operations and budget.

Business and Industry Data Center (BIDC)

IIRA continues to provide demographic and economic information to public officials, economic development professionals, and private companies through the Business and Industry Data Center (BIDC). IIRA works in cooperation with other regional affiliates to provide specialized information and services to business leaders to assist in the decision making process. On average, BIDC provides ongoing data services to four clients a month, responds to numerous other requests, and is currently working on a comprehensive set of services to offer prospective clients.

During 1998-1999, an Internet web site designed to provide statistical information easily was created and it will be deployed in early fall. The intent of this web site is to facilitate easy access to both data and maps by rural policy makers and local officials. IIRA will continue to expand this web site.

Small Business Development Center (SBDC)

The SBDC, in partnership with DCCA and the U.S. Small Business Administration, serves existing and prospective businesses in 12 west-central Illinois counties. The SBDC cooperates with community colleges, community and economic development organizations, financial institutions, and university faculty/staff to meet the diverse needs of business clients and to strengthen and expand the Illinois economy.

Within the IIRA, the SBDC provides basic business counseling services and business analyses to existing and potential small business owners throughout the region. While some clients will never start operations, it is important that they are realistic in their assessment of potential profitability.

One of the growing needs for small business personnel is to incorporate up-to-date management techniques in their businesses. The SBDC provides annual in-service training aimed at increasing the business assistance capability of SBDC personnel. It then provides small business services through either direct SBDC sponsored training events or through cosponsored training activities. Special attention is paid to minority and female business issues and concerns.

The SBDC also plays a significant role in two state initiatives:

Illinois Employment and Training Centers—IETCs. These centers, a joint partnership of the Illinois Department of Employment Security and the Job Training Partnership Act, are one-stop clearinghouses of career preparation and information for job seekers, workers, and employers. The SBDC offers regular small business development training at IETCs in Galesburg and Quincy.

Illinois Business and Industry Data Center Program. The SBDC is a local affiliate of the U.S. Census Bureau's State Data Center Program in Illinois. The BIDC program is designed to meet decisionmakers' growing needs for effective use of economic statistics by promoting the public awareness of available economic and demographic data. It works closely with IIRA's regional BIDC.

Western Illinois communities have experienced an extended period of economic restructuring. SBDC programs aimed at assisting small businesses in increasing their potential for success have made a significant contribution to the future of the region and the demand for SBDC services continues to increase.

Illinois Rural Life Panel

Since 1989, the annual Illinois Rural Life Panel (IRLP), a survey of 1,700 rural residents, has served as a tool for

gaining and sharing information about issues in rural Illinois. The IIRA funds a portion of the IRLP which has been administered by the Applied Social Research Unit, Illinois State University. Results of the survey are used by IIRA faculty and staff.

In 1998-1999, IIRA and the Illinois Arts Council supported the survey which sought rural residents' experiences and opinions about arts and cultural activities, public library services, community housing conditions, and economic and workforce development. The Applied Social Research Unit produced a 46-page report entitled, *1998- 1999 Illinois Rural Life Panel Survey: Arts and Cultural Activities, Participation, and Opportunities*. A full report summarizing all 1998-1999 survey results will be published in fall 1999. The IRLP results were used in: national and state conference presentations, newspaper stories, journal articles, professional and student research at several universities, and as a basis for some of the analyses in the Rural Partners Statewide Strategic Plan for Rural Development, *Building a Brighter Future for Rural Illinois: Goals for Stronger Communities*.

Water District Project

IIRA continues to work with the Southwest Illinois Resource Conservation and Development office and Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville (SIU-E) on a rural water district project. The project, which is in the formative stages, is financed by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. SIU-E is in charge of work related to the project and IIRA will provide technical support services.

West Central Illinois Continuum of Care Consortium

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has been encouraging communities to address the problems of housing and homelessness in a coordinated, comprehensive, and strategic fashion. In response, the West Central Illinois Continuum of Care Consortium (WCICCC) was formed in 1997. The WCICCC has been engaged in a process of developing a continuum of care strategy to ensure the creation of a single, coordinated, inclusive homeless assistance system.

WCICCC consists of eleven counties in the west central Illinois region. The following organizations are involved with the consortium. (1) Social service agencies, such as community action agencies, area agencies on aging, local offices of the Illinois Department of Human Services, mental health providers, substance abuse treatment organizations, employment services, food pantries, hospitals, and housing authorities. (2) Economic/community development organizations, including banks and businesses. (3) Local public officials. (4) Law enforcement agencies, such as municipal police, county sheriff's office, state police agencies, and probation/parole departments. (5) Ministerial associations. (6) Miscellaneous other organizations.

In fall of 1998, WCICCC contracted with IIRA for technical assistance on survey research and with writing a grant to HUD. IIRA helped the group to construct and conduct three surveys which went to service providers, homeless clients, and a focus group of individuals working with WCICCC. The information collected in the surveys was used in writing the 1999 application for the \$700,000 grant. The grant consists of four projects that will provide permanent and transitional housing in the eleven-county region. HUD is currently reviewing the grant applications and applicants should know the funding status of their grant in December 1999.

Summary and Future Directions

Rural Illinois continues to improve in economic terms, largely because of the unprecedented national and state economic growth. However, the prosperity across rural Illinois is not even. Some counties, especially in the northern third of the state, experienced population increases while those in the western region more often had declines or slow growth.

While conditions in the 1990s are clearly better than in the previous decade, some areas still face problems with low-paying jobs, relatively high outmigration, and a continued loss of businesses. Between 1990 and 1998, for instance, rural populations statewide tended to be flat while metro areas continued to increase. Since 1980, 33 counties, mostly rural, continually lost population.

The divergence between average wages and incomes in rural versus urban counties continues to increase as rural areas attract a higher proportion of relatively lower-paying consumer service jobs than urban areas. Also, many rural areas are marketed as low wage opportunities for businesses which tends to perpetuate the problem. More attention to making rural areas competitive in terms of technology and transportation access will help. The *Illinois First* program should assist in these efforts.

In many respects, there is more than one rural Illinois. Some areas, especially those bordering suburbs, are experiencing relative housing shortages while other areas are fighting to retain a viable main street or qualified labor force. Health care access continues to vary in rural Illinois, as do the reasons for poor access.

For these reasons, IIRA receives requests for more diverse services and has now broadened its capacity into housing, retail development, and social capital issues. The MAPPING program continues to receive requests for service—either the initial MAPPING program or a Re-Mapping after the initial goals have been met. The Health MAPPING program is going well and will expand in the future.

Programs, such as C-FAR, have opened new opportunities for IIRA faculty and staff to work on agricultural related projects. While production agriculture issues will still be left to the UI-Extension Service, IIRA will expand its work on value-added agriculture programs as a local economic development strategy.

In the past several years, IIRA faculty has been more involved in the instructional mission of the university. Faculty teach regularly in their respective departments and also offer classes in the University Honors Program. They also regularly provide guest lectures on request from faculty in departments across campus. These efforts are expected to increase during the next several years.

The Peace Corps Fellows curriculum has been reevaluated and refined to include four core classes in economics and geography. Political Science (public administration) has been added as a graduate program. Communities that have

hosted program interns have been pleased with their output and the students have obtained excellent placements upon graduation.

Increases in the technical assistance and public service dimensions of IIRA have come somewhat at the expense of applied and academic research into solutions for rural problems. Faculty continue to publish and present papers at academic and professional conferences. An effort is underway to involve more faculty at Western and other universities in projects. These efforts have succeeded and will continue.

IIRA personnel will continue to monitor the welfare-to-work initiatives and help local public officials find ways to create jobs and place welfare recipients in the workplace. Staff participate in conferences and workshops, and prepare reports on innovative and successful projects underway in Illinois and in other states. This is an especially important initiative in rural areas where poverty is a significant concern.

Clearly, rural Illinois has improved over the past decade. There are regions in Illinois, however, that still require additional attention. Key to improving the quality of life in these areas is a well-designed and managed local initiative(s). Identifying innovative solutions and helping community leaders and/or local public officials to implement them remains the major purpose of IIRA and the growth in resources during FY99 will enable it to do even more in the future.

Table 1. Summary of IIRA Activities, FY98 and FY99

Activity	FY98	FY99
Books	1	2*
Book Chapters	3	5**
Journal Articles	7	6***
Project Reports and Monographs	6	11****
<i>IIRA Rural Research Reports</i>	10	10
Professional and Trade Publications	15	16
Book Reviews	4	2
Conference Presentations	39	33
Conferences and Workshops Sponsored	9	8
Grants	12	20
Classes Taught	12	20
Mapping the Future of Your Community	5	7
Mapping the Future of Your Schools	4	5
Technical Assistance, and Other		
Professional Activities	60+	60+
Funding Levels (\$ 000s)	\$1,211	\$1,839

*2 pending

**4 pending

***2 pending

****2 pending

Appendix

Activities Performed by Institute Personnel

Books

Walzer, Norman and Christopher D. Merrett, eds. 1999. *A Cooperative Approach to Local Economic Development* (under contract with Quorum Books, Greenwood Publishing Group, pending).

Walzer, Norman and Robin Johnson eds. 1999. *Contracting, Managed Competition, and City Services* (under contract with Quorum Books, Greenwood Publishing Group, pending).

Book Chapters

Kline, Steven. 1999. Community Leadership and Vision Pay Off and Small Town Creates New Alliances for Community and Economic Development. In *Small Town and Rural Economic Development: A Case Studies Approach*, edited by Peter V. Schaffer and Scott Loveridge. Greenwood Publishing Group, pending.

Merrett, Christopher D. 1998. The rhetoric and rationale of free trade: A political geography perspective. In *Teaching Political Geography*, edited by Fiona Davidson, Jonathan Leib, Fred Shelley and Gerald Webster. Washington, DC: National Council for Geographic Education.

Walzer, Norman and Christopher D. Merrett. 1999. Characteristics of New Generation Cooperatives. In *A Cooperative Approach to Local Economic Development*, edited by Walzer and Merrett. Greenwood Publishing Group, pending.

Walzer, Norman and Robin Johnson. 1999. Privatization Initiatives in U.S. Cities. In *Contracting, Managed Competition, and City Services* edited by Walzer and Johnson. Greenwood Publishing Group, pending.

Walzer, Norman and Steve Kline. 1999. Changing Strategies of Downtowns in Small Cities. In *Downtowns: Revitalizing the Centers of Small Urban Communities* edited by Burayidi. Garland Publishing Inc., pending.

Journal Articles

Crump, Jeff. 1999. What cannot be seen will not be heard: The production of landscape in Moline, Illinois. *Ecumene* 6(3): 295-317.

Merrett, Christopher D. and John Gruidl. Small business ownership in Illinois: The effect of geography and gender discrimination on entrepreneurial success. *Professional Geographer*, forthcoming January 2000.

Merrett, Christopher D. and Gerald Webster. 1998. A note on the impact of place and Latino ethnicity upon Congressional support for free trade extensions in the Americas. *Southwestern Geographer* 2 (1): 40-57.

Merrett, Christopher D. and Jeff Crump. 1998. Scales of struggle: Economic restructuring in the US Midwest. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 88 (3): 497-516.

Straub, LaVonne A., S. Pan, and E. Szigeti. 1998. Factors influencing nurses to practice in rural areas. *Texas Journal of Rural Health* 16 (2): 5-14.

Straub, LaVonne A. and S. Straub. Consumer and provider evaluation of rural pharmacy services. *The Journal of Rural Health*, forthcoming Fall 1999.

Project Reports and Monographs

Baird, Nancy, Robin Johnson, Joel McQueen, Christopher Merrett, Lyle Nichols, Lori Sutton, Norman Walzer, and Bill Westerhold. 1999. *Enhancing Local Mobility*. Springfield: Rural Partners and Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs, pending.

_____. 1999. *Building a Brighter Future for Rural Illinois: The Role of Public Transportation*. Springfield: Rural Partners and Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs, pending.

Merrett, Christopher D. and Norman Walzer. 1999. *Bibliography of Cooperatives and Cooperative Development*. Macomb: Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs.

Merrett, Christopher D., Mary Holmes and Jennifer Waner. 1999. *Directory of New Generation Cooperatives*. Macomb: Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs.

Henning, Katherine. 1999. *Restaurant Start-up Profile*. Springfield: Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs.

McFarland, William P. 1999. *Career Guidance Programs in Rural Schools: Framework for the Future*. Macomb: Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs.

Improving Access and Mobility in Rural Illinois: Case Study of Southern Seven Counties. 1998. Macomb: Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs.

Building a Brighter Future for Rural Illinois: Goals for Stronger Communities. 1998. Springfield, IL: Rural Partners.

Johnson, Robin A. and Norman Walzer. 1998. *Efficiency in County Government: The Role of Intergovernmental Agreements and Privatization*. Springfield: Illinois Office of the Comptroller.

Directory of Manufacturers in Western Illinois 1998. 1998. Macomb: Rural Economic Technical Assistance Center and Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs.

Walzer, Norman and Karen Stott. 1998. *Enhancing Economic Development Through Libraries*. Ontario, Canada: AST Consultants; reprinted by IIRA.

IIRA Rural Research Reports—1998-1999 Series

Straub, LaVonne A. and Debbie Hedger. Consumer Satisfaction with Rural Pharmacy Services. Volume 10, Issue 1.

Liebenstein, Ann M. Conversion of School Buildings in Rural Illinois Communities. Volume 10, Issue 2.

Gruidl, John, Kathleen Brown, Catherine Westerlund, Paul Elgation, and David Dyrek. Housing Options for Rural Elderly: Case Studies in Illinois. Volume 10, Issue 3.

Johnson, Robin A. and Norman Walzer. Innovation in Rural Illinois: Contracting Practices in Nonmetropolitan Counties. Volume 10, Issue 4.

Paszkiewicz, Scott. How Communities Build and Evaluate Social Capital. Volume 10, Issue 5.

Sarvela, Paul D. and Eduardo A. Monge. Health Behaviors of Elementary School Children in Rural Southern Illinois. Volume 10, Issue 6.

Straub, LaVonne A. and Mary Jane Clark. Community Preparation for the Aging Population in Rural Illinois. Volume 10, Issue 7.

Glasser, Michael and Thomas Prohaska. The Role of Informal Caregivers in the Health Care Decisions of Older Adults in Rural Communities. Volume 10, Issue 8.

Rittenmeyer, Steven D. Student Suicide and Illinois' Small Schools: Breaking the Silence. Volume 10, Issue 9.

Walzer, Norman, Christopher Merrett, and Mary Holmes. Agriculture and Local Economic Development. Volume 10, Issue 10.

Professional and Trade Publications

Crump, Jeff and Brunn, M., Delany-Barmann et al. 1998. *A Spatial Study of Hispanics in Illinois*. Working Paper No. 43, Julian Samora Research Institute, Michigan State University.

Gruidl, John, Gary Green, Steve Halebsky, and N.R. Sumathi. 1998. Measuring the success of economic development tools. *Rural Development News*, North Central Center for Rural Development (Fall) Vol. 22, No. 3.

Johnson, Robin A. 1998. Privatization of government services: Challenges and issues for small communities, *Council Insights*, National Council for Public Private Partnerships (August): 1-7.

_____. 1998. Privatization of government services: Challenges and issues for small communities, *Illinois Municipal Review* (September): 24-25.

_____. 1999. Local governments provide opportunities for small businesses, *American Small Business Association Today* (Winter): 10-12.

_____ and Norman Walzer. 1999. Efficiency in county government: The role of intergovernmental agreements and privatization, *County to County* (January): 10-13, 42-43.

Johnson, Robin A. and Shawn J. Gillen. 1999. Small-town enters into cutting-edge public-private partnership, *Privatization Watch* (267) (March): 7.

Johnson, Robin A. 1999. Small-town innovation: Monmouth, Illinois, enters into cutting-edge public-private partnership, *Privatization 1999: The 13th Annual Report on Privatization* (Spring): 11-12.

Merrett, Christopher D. 1999. The role of new generation cooperatives in local economic development, *RETAC News and Views* 4 (2): 1.

_____. 1998. *Directory of Nonprofit Organizations in Rural Illinois, 1998*. With the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago and the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation. Chicago, IL: Federal Reserve Bank.

Rittenmeyer, Steven D. 1999. Student suicide and educator duty: A law and policy survey, *Building Leadership*, Illinois Principals Association, 6, (7) (March).

Walzer, Norman. 1999. Municipal price index, 1998, *Illinois Municipal Review* (July): 7-8.

_____ with Sam Baner. 1998. Regional councils and GIS in Illinois," *Illinois GIS and MapNotes* 16 (Fall): 34-37.

Ziebarth, Ann. 1998. Local housing assessment. *Building Better Communities Factsheet*. Macomb, IL: University of Illinois Extension.

_____. Hiring a housing consultant/developer. *Building Better Communities Factsheet*. Macomb, IL: University of Illinois Extension.

_____. Resources for more information on housing assessment. *Building Better Communities Factsheet*. Macomb, IL: University of Illinois Extension.

Book Reviews

Merrett, Christopher D. 1999. Review of *NAFTA as a Model of Development: The Benefits and Costs of Merging High- and Low-Wage Areas*, edited by Richard S. Belous and Jonathan Lemco. In *Political Geography*. 18: 381-384.

_____. 1998. Review of *Canada and the Global Economy: The Geography of Structural and Technological Change*, edited by John Britton. In *The Canadian Geographer*. 42 (2): 205-207.

Conference Presentations

Crump, Jeff. 1999. "Identity and Corporate Landscapes: John Deere and Moline, Illinois." Annual meeting of the Association of American Geographers, Honolulu, Hawaii, March.

_____. "Local Identity and Local Landscapes." Invited presentation at *Theorizing Time and Space at the End of the Millennium* conference, University of Georgia, Athens, GA.

_____. "Social Memory, Local Identity and the Landscape of Canton, Illinois." Biennial conference at the Center for Working Class Studies, Youngstown State University, Youngstown, OH.

Gruidl, John. 1999. "Establishing Partnerships for Effective Field Support." Peace Corps Fellows National Convocation, Chicago, June.

Gruidl, John. 1999. Panel member: "Creating a Blueprint for a Consortium of Peace Corps Fellows Community Development Programs." Peace Corps Fellows Annual National Convocation, "Blueprints for Change," April 12-15, 1999, Chicago.

Gruidl, John, Lee Eavy, and Anne Heinze Silvis. 1999. "Building Partnerships for Field Support." Peace Corps Fellows Annual National Convocation, "Blueprints for Change," April 12-15, 1999, Chicago.

Hanna, Robin. 1999. Keynote Panelist: "Moving Forward: The Role of Existing Business Programs in Economic Development." 1999 Business Retention & Expansion International annual conference, Portland, OR, May.

Johnson, Robin A. 1998 "Privatization in Illinois Municipalities." Illinois Government Finance Officers Association, downstate chapter, Urbana, IL, July.

_____. 1998. "Privatization of Government Services: Challenges and Issues for Small and Medium-sized

Communities." National Council for Public-Private Partnerships annual conference, Atlanta, GA, October.

_____. 1998. "Local Government Contracting of Environmental Services: Opportunities and Pitfalls." Midwest Environmental Summit, Illinois Association of Environmental Labs, Inc., Chicago, IL, December.

_____. 1999. "Efficiency in County Government: The Role of Intergovernmental Agreements and Privatization." Illinois Association of County Officials, Spring conference, County Board member division, Peoria, IL, April.

_____. 1999. "Transitioning Employees: Proactive Management Practices That Eliminate Harmful Misconceptions About Outsourcing." International Quality and Productivity Center (IQPC) conference, Atlanta, GA, April.

_____. 1999. "Public-Private Partnerships in Illinois: The Monmouth Experience." Illinois Chapter of the American Public Works Association annual conference, Springfield, IL, May.

_____. 1999. "Building a Competitive Environment in Illinois Cities and Counties." Washington Institute Foundation annual conference, Seattle, WA, June.

_____. 1999. "Privatization: Theory and Practical Realities." Association of Washington Cities annual conference, Wenatchee, WA, June.

Kline, Steven. 1998. "Strategic Visioning for Community and Economic Development." Putting Leadership to Work: North Dakota Interactive Video Network Series, Fargo, ND, July.

Merrett, Christopher D. 1999. "Culture Wars and National Education Standards: Scale and Struggle over Social Reproduction." Research in Geographic Education conference, Gilbert Grosvenor Center for Geographic Education, Southwest Texas State University, San Marcos, TX, May.

_____ with Thomas Rumney, 1999. "Canadian Studies in the US." Association of American Geographers (AAG) annual meeting, Honolulu, HI, March.

Merrett, Christopher D. 1999. "The Geography of Welfare Reform in Illinois: The Role of Nonprofit Social Service Providers in the Journey from Welfare to Work." Clyde Kohn Memorial Colloquium, University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA, January.

_____. 1998. "Author meets the critics: Commentary on *World Trade since 1438* by John Hugill." Social Science History Association annual meeting, Chicago, IL, November.

_____ with Gerald R. Webster. 1998. "The Impact of Place and Latino Ethnicity upon Congressional Support for Free Trade Extensions in the Americas." Southwestern Division of the AAG annual meeting, Baton Rouge, LA, October.

Merrett, Christopher D. 1998. "The Role of Nonprofit Social Service Providers in Rural Welfare Reform." The Small City and Regional Community annual conference, University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, Stevens Point, WI, October.

_____. 1998. "Writing for the *Journal of Geography*." National Council on Geographic Education annual meeting, Indianapolis, IN, October.

_____. 1998. "Teaching the Geography of Welfare Reform from a Social Justice Perspective." National Council on Geographic Education annual meeting, Indianapolis, IN, October.

Straub, LaVonne A. and Carolyn Tripp. 1999. "Access to Prescription Drugs and Information: Technology Implications for Rural Residents." Association of Health Services Research annual meeting, Chicago, June.

_____. 1999. "Search for Drug Information: Technology Implications for Rural Consumers and Pharmacies." Rural Retail Symposium, Snowbird, UT, June.

Walzer, Norman. 1999. "Preparing Public Librarians for Community Development Outreach." Iowa State Library Conference, Dubuque, IA.

_____. 1999. "Innovative Programs in Small Metro Areas." Rural Sociological Society meetings, Chicago.

_____. 1999. "Demographic and Economic Trends in Rural Illinois." Illinois State Geographic Information Society, Champaign.

_____. 1999. "Library Outreach Programs From Four Perspectives." Community Economic Development in a Connected Canada: Libraries and Smart Communities, Toronto.

_____. 1998. "Community Development Goals, Strategies and Sustained Development in U.S. Cities." Community Development Society meetings, Kansas City; also presented to Mid-Continent Regional Science Association meetings, Rockford, IL 1998.

_____. 1998. "Role of Libraries in Community Development." Libraries as Leaders in Community Development conference, Victoria, British Columbia.

_____. 1998. "Partnerships in U.S. Cities." International Sociological Association World Congress, Montreal, Canada.

Westerhold, Bill. 1999. "Developing GIS in Rural Planning Agencies: What Have We Learned." Illinois Geographic Information Systems Association Spring conference, Champaign, IL April.

Voorhis, Daniel D., and Donna Corrie. 1998. "Idea Person or Inventor." Illinois Small Business Development Association, Rockford, IL.

_____ and Carol Stombaugh. 1999. "Women Business Ownership." Women's Issues and Leadership Conference, Macomb, IL, April.

Other Presentations

Hanna, Robin. Fairbury Association of Commerce annual meeting.

_____. Abingdon Chamber of Commerce annual meeting.

Robin A. Johnson. 1998. "Innovative Management Practices in Illinois Local Governments." Triangle of Opportunity, Hopedale, IL, August.

_____. 1998. "Innovation in Local Governments: The Role of Intergovernmental Agreements and Privatization."

Abingdon City Council special meeting, Abingdon, IL, September.

_____. 1999. "Public-Private Partnerships in Illinois: The Monmouth Experience." Northwest Illinois Municipal League, Moline, IL, April.

_____. 1999. "Local Government in Illinois: Challenges and Opportunities." Warren-Henderson Leadership Training conference, Oquawka, IL, April.

_____. 1999. "Investment Policies for Local Governments: New Mandate or New Opportunity?." Local government forums sponsored by Security Savings Bank of Monmouth, IL, in Monmouth, IL, and Stronghurst, IL, June.

Straub, LaVonne A. 1999. "Rural Illinois: An Integration of Factors." Physician Assistance students (Midwestern University) interested in rural practice, Freeport Hospital, May.

Ziebarth, Ann. 1999. "Building Better Communities." Retirement Housing Workshop, Galesburg, IL, January.

Training Programs and Technical Assistance

Baird, Nancy. 1998-1999. Member, Statewide Resource Development Committee, Project Success.

Hanna, Robin. Mapping the Future of Your Community Strategic Visioning Sessions: Annawan, Beecher City, Bethany, Carbon Cliff, Hinckley, Sheffield., Toulon.

_____. 1998-1999. Provided ongoing community support and technical assistance coordination for more than 60 MAPPING communities.

_____. 1998-1999. Re-Mapping the Future of Your Community: Dieterich, Fairbury, Gardner, and Tiskilwa.

_____. 1998-1999. Business Retention & Expansion International Master Consultant Training for 1999 Peace Corps Fellows.

Kline, Steven. 1998. Facilitator, West Central Illinois Value-Added Agriculture Planning Team, September.

_____. 1998. Presenter/Facilitator, Agri-Tourism Opportunities in Warren County. Warren-Henderson

County Partnership for Economic Development, September.

_____. with Norm Walzer, and Dan Walker. 1998. Strategic Visioning and Planning Program for Macomb Area Industrial Development Corporation, October.

Kline, Steven. 1998. Facilitator, Mapping the Future of Your Community, Annawan, Sheffield, and Carbon Cliff, September-November.

_____. 1999. Facilitator, Mapping the Future of Your Community, Beecher City, Hinckley, Toulon, and Astoria, January-May.

_____. 1999. "Strategic Visioning and Planning." Warren-Henderson County Leadership Training Workshop, University of Illinois Extension, January.

Kline, Steven and Dan Walker. 1999. Strategic Visioning and Planning Program for Illinois Development Council, January.

Kline, Steven. 1999. "Mapping the Future of Your Community." Alliance Library System Training Workshop, March.

_____. 1999. "Strategic Visioning and Planning." Macomb Leadership Academy, April.

_____. 1999. "Strategic Visioning and Planning." Canton Leadership Academy, April.

_____ with Mary Holmes. 1999. Facilitator for the McDonough County Agricultural Coalition Strategic Visioning and Planning Process, June.

Merrett, Christopher D. with Mary Holmes. 1999. "The Role of Cooperatives in Local Economic Development." Poster session at the C-FAR conference, Springfield, IL, March.

Merrett, Christopher D. 1999. "Cooperative and Collaborative Strategies for Local Economic Development." Illinois Farm Bureau, Jacksonville, IL, February.

_____. 1999. "The Role of New Generation Cooperatives in Regional Economic Development." Illinois Farm

Bureau Agri-Visor Seminar Series, Mount Vernon, IL, January.

_____. 1999. "The Role of Nonprofit Social Service Providers in Welfare Reform." Illinois Department of Human Services, Chicago, IL.

_____. 1998. "Free trade: Neither Free nor about Trade." Invited lecture, Department of Geography, University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls, IA, October.

RTAC. 1998. Maintenance Seminar, Springfield, IL, November.

RTAC. 1998-1999. Management Programs: "Marketing" Monticello, October 1998; "Strategic Planning" Springfield, January 1999.

RTAC. 1998-1999. "Defensive Driving Workshop" Jo Daviess Transit, Galena; CRIS Senior Services, Danville; Rides Mass Transit District, Harrisburg.

_____. 1998-1999. "Passenger Assistance Workshop." CRIS Senior Services, Danville; Warren Achievement Transportation, Monmouth; Coles County Council on Aging, Charleston; South Central Transit, Mt. Vernon.

Westerhold, Bill. 1999. GIS workshop: Two Rivers Regional Council of Public Officials, Macomb, IL June.

_____. 1999. GIS workshop, MSC Community Services, Macomb, IL June.

Voorhis, Daniel D., and Ed VanLeer. 1999. "Small Business Development Programs." Quincy Public Library, Quincy, IL, May.

_____ and Carol Stombaugh. 1999. "Small Business Development Programs." Illinois Employment Training Center, Galesburg, January.

Voorhis, Daniel D. 1999. "New Agri Business Opportunity." McDonough Agri Coalition, Macomb,, March.

_____. 1999. "Small Business Development Programs." Rushville Chamber of Commerce, Rushville, IL, April.

_____. 1998-1999. "Building a Winning Image." Rushville, August; Monmouth, September; Quincy,

October and May; Macomb, November and April; Canton, February; Carthage, March; Galesburg, June.

_____. 1998-1999. "Analyzing the Marketplace." Rushville, August; Monmouth, September; Quincy, October and May; Macomb, December and April; Canton, February; Carthage, March; Galesburg, June.

_____. 1998-99. "Business Planning." Rushville, August; Monmouth, September; Quincy, November and May; Macomb, December and April; Canton, February; Carthage, March; Galesburg, June.

_____. 1998-99. "Getting the Money." Rushville, August; Monmouth, September; Quincy, November and June; Macomb, December and April; Canton, February; Carthage, March; Galesburg, June.

Other Off-Campus Professional Activities

Eavy, Lee, and John Gruidl. 1998-1999. National Consortium for Community-University Partnerships (NCCUP); participation on steering committee to found this new organization. Coordinating and founders' committee meeting at PCF national Convocation, April 13, 1999, Chicago.

_____. 1998-1999. Organizational planning and consulting with South Dakota authorities to expand the Peace Corps Fellows program into South Dakota, assisting them to develop and implement their own program.

Eavy, Lee. 1998. Program development workshop at University of Oregon, Eugene.

_____. 1999. Steering committee member, 1999 PCF Convocation, "Blueprints for Change", for April 12-15 meeting in Chicago; cosponsored with DePaul University and Illinois State University.

_____. 1999. Invited participant from WIU to work with "Pilot Watershed Management Program" coordinating committee and workshops with IDNR: Springfield and Urbana.

Hanna, Robin. Elected President-Elect (1999), Business Retention & Expansion International. 2nd Year Economic Development Institute, Norman, OK.

Kline, Steven. 1999. Member, Planning Team, Statewide Community Leadership Conference, June.

Merrett, Christopher D. Chair, Canadian Geography Specialty Group, Student Paper Competition, Association of American Geographers (AAG), 1999.

_____. Conference Planning Committee, 5th Annual Rural Poverty Conference, Springfield, IL, 1998.

_____. Executive Board Member, AAG, Canadian Studies Specialty Group, 1997-1999.

_____. Nominating Committee Member, AAG, Political Geography Specialty Group, 1998-99.

_____. Panel Chair, AAG Meeting, Boston, MA, 1998.

_____. President, Canadian Studies Specialty Group, AAG, 1998-2000.

_____. Session Organizer, Geography and Social Justice, NCGE Meeting, Indianapolis, IN, 1998.

Straub, LaVonne A. Member, Editorial Board, the Journal of Rural Health.

_____. Coordinator, abstract review process for research to be presented at the National Rural Health Association annual meeting.

_____. Member, annual conference planning committee, National Rural Health Association.

_____. May, 1999. Grant review committee for the Rural/Downstate Health Act Grant (IDPH, Center for Rural Health).

_____. Board Member, Illinois Rural Health Association.

_____. Member, Professional Staffing Task Force, Illinois Hospital and Health Systems Association.

_____. Community Service: Member, Private Industry Council, Illinois Service Delivery Area 14, Job Training Partnership Act.

Walzer, Norman. Member, Governor George H. Ryan Transition Team, Agricultural and Rural Development section, 1999.

_____. Member, Advisory Committee, Department of Human and Community Development, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1998-2000.

_____. Member, Scientific Advisory Committee, Illinois River Strategy Team, State of Illinois 1998-99.

_____. Member, Advisory Council to College of Agriculture, Consumer and Environmental Sciences, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1998-99.

_____. Member, Team to Revise *Take Charge* sponsored by the North Central Regional Center for Rural Development, 1998.

_____. Member, Steering Committee, Rural Partners, 1992-present.

_____. Member, Office of the Comptroller Local Government Advisory Board, 1993- present.

_____. Member, Editorial Board, *Regional Science Perspectives*, 1988 to present.

Grants

Gruidl, John. 1998. Peace Corps Fellows—Rural Community Development. Americorps. Funding level \$16,000.

_____. 1998. Peace Corps Fellows—Community Contributions. Funding level \$113,445.

_____. 1998. Rural Development Opportunities. Council on Food and Agricultural Research. Funding level \$45,000.

Hanna, Robin. 1998. Existing Agribusiness Program Support. Council on Food and Agricultural Research. Funding level \$10,000.

Kline, Steve. 1998. Mapping the Future of Your Community. Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs. Funding level \$115,000.

_____. 1999. Mapping the Future of Your Community's Health. Illinois Department of Public Health—Center for Rural Health. Funding level \$40,000.

_____. 1998. Community MAPPING Sponsorships. Funding level \$8,050.

Sutton, Lori. 1998. Continuum of Care. Western Illinois Regional Council, West Central Illinois Coordinating Group, Funding level \$4,000.

Voorhis, Daniel D. 1998. "Western Illinois Small Business Development Center." Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs. Funding level \$103,933.

Walzer, Norman. Rural Partners Transportation Task Force, U.S. Department of Agriculture-Rural Development. Funding level \$34,952.

_____. Rural Transportation Model. National Governors' Association Center for Best Practices grant through the Illinois Department of Human Services. Funding level \$9,857.

Walzer, Norman and Bill Westerhold. 1998. Providing GIS to Regional Planning Councils—Year Five. U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration. Funding level \$34,000.

_____. GIS Matching Funds. Funding level \$10,000.

Walzer, Norman. 1998. "Annual Report to Governor and Illinois General Assembly on Status of Rural." Governor's Rural Affairs Council. Funding level \$5,000.

_____. 1998. "Value-Added Communities." Council of Food and Agricultural Research. Funding level \$90,284.

Walzer, Norman and Joel McQueen. 1998. "Rural Transit Assistance Center: Continuation." Illinois Department of Transportation, Division of Public Transportation. Funding level \$149,710.

Walzer, Norman and Dan Walker. 1998. "University Center Continuation Grant." U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration. Funding level \$100,000.

Walker, Dan. Report of Economic Development Associates. Illinois Development Council. Funding level \$6,997.